

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAPE T 00370 01 OF 02 251717Z
ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6833
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INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 0370

EXDIS

FOR MOOSE FROM BOWDLER

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: NEXT STEPS

REF: (A) LONDON 2978, (B) LONDON 2979, (C) STATE 49593,

1. FOLLOWING ARE MY COMMENTS ON THE STATUS OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSAL AS A RESULT OF RECENT EVENTS IN SALISBURY AND LONDON AND WHERE WE GO FROM HERE.

2. AS A RESULT OF THE AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE AT THE SALISBURY TALKS AND THE ATTENTION THIS HAS GENERATED, AND OWEN'S UNILATERAL ACTIONS IN TRYING TO GET NKOMO TO JOIN THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT EFFORT, THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSAL HAS FOR THE MOMENT SUFFERED A SERIOUS SETBACK. INDEED, THE POINT HAS BEEN REACHED WHERE:
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PAGE 02 CAPE T 00370 01 OF 02 251717Z

(A) IF WE WERE TO PURSUE IT INFORMALLY, WE WOULD BE CHARGED WITH TRYING TO SABOTAGE A GENUINE EFFORT BY WHITES AND BLACKS IN RHODESIA TO FIND A SOLUTION; AND

(B) IN THE ABSENCE OF A BREAKDOWN IN SALISBURY, WE COULD IN FACT BE IN DIFFICULTY IF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT SUDDENLY

ACCEPTED THE PLAN OR CALLED FOR A NEW MEETING SINCE NEITHER WE NOR THE BRITISH COULD DELIVER THE ESSENTIAL FOLLOW-UP, I.E., PRESSURE ON SMITH (AND HIS BLACK COLLEAGUES) VIA SOUTH AFRICA SUFFICIENT TO FORCE ACCEPTANCE OF THE PLAN.

3. SOUTH AFRICA FEELS STRONGLY THAT THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT SHOULD BE GIVEN EVERY CHANCE AND BECAUSE OF THE DEVELOPING FAVORABLE REACTION IN THE WEST TO THE RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN SALISBURY, THE SAG SEEMS TO FEEL INCREASED CONFIDENCE THAT SANCTIONS CAN NOT BE APPLIED. THUS WE CAN EXPECT THE SOUTH AFRICANS TO BE EVEN MORE RESISTANT THAN IN THE PAST TO SUGGESTIONS THAT THEY PRESS SMITH TO ACCEPT THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN.

4. I BELIEVE THAT OUR BEST COURSE IS TO CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN A LOW POSTURE AND HEALTHY SKEPTICISM TOWARDS THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT, POINTING OUT ITS SHORTCOMINGS BUT IN NO WAY APPEARING TO BE THE SPOILER. AS INDICATED IN EARLIER ASSESSMENTS, WE DO NOT THINK THAT THE AGREEMENT IN SALISBURY AT THIS STAGE IS A STABLE ONE. WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO HOLD THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN AS A STANDARD FOR INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTABILITY BUT AVOID ATTEMPTS TO GENERATE NEW ACTIVITY ON ITS BEHALF, UNLESS THE SITUATION CHANGES WITH A MAJOR SHIFT BY NKOMO OR MUZOREWA.

5. WE SHOULD OF COURSE NOT SEEM TO BE ABANDONING THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 CAPE T 00370 01 OF 02 251717Z

PLAN BUT SHOULD INDICATE THAT ACTIVE EFFORTS TO MOVE AHEAD ARE BEING HELD IN ABEYANCE PENDING DEVELOPMENTS. THIS POSTURE SHOULD PROVIDE MUZOREWA THE ALTERNATIVE THAT HE FINDS USEFUL IN HIS BARGAINING WITH SMITH. AT THIS POINT, HOWEVER, THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN WOULD SEEM TO BE LESS OF A LEVER FOR MUZOREWA ON SMITH THAN THE CONTINUING GUERRILLA THREAT AND RECOGNITION BY ALL THE SALISBURY GROUP THAT EVENTUAL US, WESTERN AND AFRICAN ACCEPTANCE OF AN INTERNALLY-ARRANGED GOVERNMENT WILL BE SHAPED BY ITS NATURE.

6. GIVEN THIS OVERALL PICTURE, WE FACE THREE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS: (1) HOW TO REACT TO THE BRITISH NKOMO GAMBIT; (2) WHETHER TO ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT; AND (3) WHAT TO SAY TO THE FRONT LINE AND PATRIOTIC FRONT.

7. OWEN'S PENCHANT FOR ENCOURAGING THE NKOMO GAMBIT IS PROBABLY BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT, IF SUCCESSFUL, IT WOULD DIMINISH, IF NOT SOLVE, THE TWO FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS WE NOW FACE: (1) THE PROSPECT OF A SERIOUS DETERIORATION IN OUR RELATIONS GENERALLY WITH THE FRONT LINE AND (2) POSSIBLE ESCALATION OF SOVIET AND CUBAN

INVOLVEMENT AND BALLOONING OF A MAJOR EAST-WEST
CONFRONTATION. CONSEQUENTLY THE MERITS OF OWEN'S
STRATEGY DEPEND UPON THE CHANCES OF PERSUADING NKOMO
TO STRIKE A DEAL AS MEASURED AGAINST THE RISK INVOLVED THAT
IN MAKING OUR EFFORT WE WOULD EXACERBATE THE FIRST
PROBLEM AND EVENTUALLY THE SECOND AS WELL. AT PRESENT THE
CHANCES OF PERSUADING NKOMO TO JOIN THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS
SEEMS REMOTE, AS STEVE LOW HAS POINTED OUT. WITH SO
DUBIOUS A PROSPECT IT WOULD BE FOOLHARDY TO GET INVOLVED IN
OWEN'S NKOMO GAMBIT AND THEREBY SERIOUSLY RISK OUR
CREDIBILITY WITH NYERERE, MACHEL, KAUNDA AND OTHERS.

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PAGE 01 CAPE T 00370 02 OF 02 251730Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 0370

EXDIS

FOR MOOSE FROM BOWDLER

8. THUS, WE SHOULD NOT AT THIS POINT ENGAGE IN EFFORTS
TO ENCOURAGE NKOMO TO BARGAIN WITH THE SALISBURY GROUP.
THERE IS NO UNDOING WHAT THE BRITISH HAVE ALREADY DONE IN
THIS REGARD. BUT SINCE WE CAN HONESTLY DISCLAIM PRIOR KNOWLEDGE
OR RESPONSIBILITY FOR IT, IT MAY DO US LITTLE ADDITIONAL
HARM SHOULD IT BECOME KNOWN AND BACKFIRE. WE SHOULD, HOWEVER,
URGE THE BRITISH TO TAKE NO FURTHER STEPS UNLESS THERE IS A CLEAR
POSITIVE SIGNAL FROM EITHER NKOMO OR KAUNDA. IF THERE IS SUCH A
SIGNAL, WE COULD THEN CONSIDER WHETHER AND HOW TO ENCOURAGE IT.

9. THE SECOND QUESTION IS WHETHER WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE TO INSIST ON THE MOST CREDIBLE TRANSITION AND SETTLEMENT ARRANGEMENTS POSSIBLE. IN HIS LONG TALKS WITH SITHOLE, OWEN ALREADY HAS SET UP CRITERIA FOR THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT WITH THE IMPLICIT COMMITMENT
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PAGE 02 CAPE T 00370 02 OF 02 251730Z

THAT THE CLOSER THE GROUP COMES TO MEETING THESE CRITERIA, THE MORE BRITISH (AND WESTERN) SUPPORT THEY MAY EXPECT. EFFORTS OF THIS SORT TO INFLUENCE THE SALISBURY SETTLEMENT RUN COUNTER TO OUR WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE INTERNAL PROCESS AND COULD OF COURSE FURTHER UNDERMINE OUR RELATIONS WITH THE FRONT LINE. BUT GIVEN THE FACT THAT WE ARE CAUGHT IN A POSITION WHERE WE CAN NEITHER ENDORSE THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT NOR ACTIVELY PURSUE THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN, IT WOULD SEEM TO SERVE OUR PURPOSED TO HAVE THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT BECOME MORE CREDIBLE AND MORE IN LINE WITH THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN SO THAT (A) IT MIGHT BECOME MORE ATTRACTIVE TO NKOMO AND (B) MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE FRONT LINE STATES TO RATIONALIZE ALL-OUT HOSTILITY TO IT.

10. SINCE THE BRITISH HAVE ALREADY HAD EXTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH SITHOLE, WE MIGHT CONSIDER A LOW KEY APPROACH TO MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE ENCOURAGING THEM TO HOLD OUT FOR REMOVAL OF SMITH FROM LEADERSHIP OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT AND IMPRESSING ON THEM THE IMPORTANCE OF A MECHANISM WHICH THE WORLD WILL ACCEPT AS OPEN AND FAIR FOR DETERMINING THE VIEWS OF THE BLACK AND WHITE POPULATION ON THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT.

11. REGARDING WHAT TO DO VIS-A-VIS THE FLS AND PF IN THE LIGHT OF THE IMPACT OF RECENT EVENTS ON THE AAP, I BELIEVE THE BEST APPROACH IS A STRAIGHT-FORWARD, EXCHANGE OF VIEWS INCLUDING OUR OWN CANDID ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION. IN THIS APPROACH WE SHOULD REVIEW WHY THE A-A EFFORTS HAVE NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL. THIS WOULD INCLUDE HOW PF DIVISIONS AND OB DURACY HAVE PREVENTED PROGRESS AND CONTRIBUTED TO SMITH LAUNCHING HIS INTERNAL SETTLEMENT EFFORT. WE SHOULD UNDERSCORE THAT WE DO NOT THINK THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT IS ASSURED AND THAT OUR OFFICIAL REACTION HAS ESSENTIALLY BEEN ONE OF HEALTHY SKEPTICISM. AT THE SAME TIME WE SHOULD
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PAGE 03 CAPE T 00370 02 OF 02 251730Z

FRANKLY STATE THAT A HOSTILE US STAND TOWARD DEVELOPMENTS IN SALISBURY WOULD NOT IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES BE APPROPRIATE, AND THAT DOMESTIC REACTION REINFORCES THIS POSITION. WE SHOULD STATE FRANKLY THAT WHILE THIS IS

PARTICULARLY TRUE IN THE UK, WE ALSO FACE SIMILAR DOMESTIC CONSTRAINTS IN THE UNITED STATES. THE MESSAGE WOULD STRESS THAT THE SITUATION IS STILL FLUID AND THAT WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO A SETTLEMENT ALONG THE LINES OF THE AAP, OPEN TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED ON A FAIR AND REASONABLE BASIS WHICH WOULD LEAD TO GENUINE MAJORITY RULE. THE MESSAGE WOULD CONCLUDE THAT WE BELIEVE WE MUST REMAIN FLEXIBLE AT THIS POINT BUT KEEP THE PRESSURE ON SMITH. ONE WAY TO DO THIS, THE MESSAGE COULD SUGGEST, WOULD BE TO CONTINUE TO HOLD OPEN THE OPTION OF REVIVING THE AA PLAN, ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT HAVE TO BE REVISED.

12. THE FOREGOING MESSAGE CAN BEST BE HANDLED IN FACE-TO-FACE DISCUSSION. WHILE AMBASSADORS COULD DO THIS, IT WOULD HAVE GREATER IMPACT IF PARTICIPANTS IN THE HIGH LEVEL DISCUSSION IN LONDON AND WASHINGTON WERE TO COME TO AFRICA TO CONDUCT THE DIALOGUE. I WOULD HOPE THAT THE MOOSE TRIP COULD BE RESCHEDULED FOR THIS PURPOSE. SO AS TO MAINTAIN THE ANGLO-AMERICAN WANT (AND ALLOW THE BRITISH TO DO THEIR OWN EXPLAINING OF OWEN'S RECENT ACTION), I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT AN APPROPRIATELY HIGH HMS OFFICIAL (E.G. GRAHAM) ACCOMPANY HIM ON THE JOURNEY. BOWDLER

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